

ABL finance officer retires

Patricia Dean, who began her government career at age 16 as a clerk-typist in Okinawa and rose to become a GS-15, retires today after 39 years in a variety of jobs in a string of military facilities, including 11.5 years as a financial officer with the Airborne Laser program.

After leaving an Army hospital in Okinawa, Japan, where she began as a GS-02, Dean, a

native of Des Moines, Iowa, returned to the United States as a clerk at Lackland and Kelly AFBs, Texas.

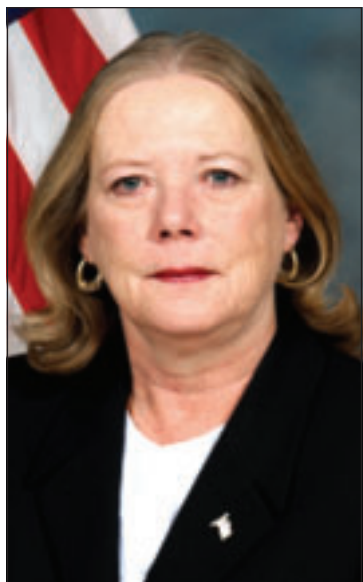
In 1972, she left to be secretary to the commander of the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing in Ubon, Thailand.

In 1974, after U.S. troops were withdrawn from Indochina, Dean worked at the Air Reserve Personnel Center at Lowry AFB, Colo.

Her career in weapons acquisition began in 1980 when she became a budget analyst for the Peacekeeper missile program in San Bernardino, Calif.

Selected to start up the Financial Management Division for the Small Intercontinental Ballistic Missile program, she became the group's deputy director until she left in 1991 to start up the program control division for the Reentry System Launch program.

A year later, she helped establish the Airborne Laser program at Kirtland AFB and eventually became director of the Airborne Laser Program Control Division.



Patricia Dean

Commander states after deployment down time policy

2D LT. MICHELLE ESTEP

377th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

In a recently updated policy, Gen. Gregory S. Martin, Air Force Materiel Command commander, directed all personnel returning from AEF or contingency deployments be given down-time upon their return to home station.

Commanders are authorized to provide deployed military personnel with one day of down-time for every six days deployed, for a maximum of 14 days.

Individual Mobilization Augmentees assigned to AFMC are authorized down-time or special passes outlined under General Martin's memorandum.

Personnel will have the option of taking one four-day pass during their down-time period where they can travel anywhere during the four days, but the pass must begin and end in the local area. Passes may not be used in conjunction with leave.

For the remainder of the down-time, personnel must remain "present for duty" with their duty location being at home taking care of personal and professional matters that need attention due to their lengthy deployment. If the member desires to depart the local area for more than four days during their down-time, they must be on ordinary leave.

The pass/down-time will begin as soon as possible, but no later than 72 hours after the comple-

tion of the deployment.

In extreme circumstances, due to mission requirements, the commander may delay the beginning of the down-time up to two weeks.

The special pass will be in accordance with Air Force Instruction 36-3003.

For accountability, all personnel must report to their orderly room and Personnel Readiness Unit in the Military Personnel Flight upon return from temporary duty. Members will be updated as present for duty after completion of their Redeployment In-processing Checklist.

Additionally, commanders should consider the load carried by personnel who remained at home station during the contingency deployment. In almost all cases the rest of the unit members worked longer shifts and took on additional duties while their co-workers were deployed.

General Martin encourages a continuation of all existing compensation time programs, military and civilian, as commanders determine appropriate.

According to General Martin, "taking care of our people is the most important contribution we can make to combat readiness. Recognizing stress caused by deployments with an appropriate recovery period is the right thing to do."

For more information or a copy of the policy, contact Ruth Ann Eppeley, DSN 986-1324.

Air Force brings DFAS Airmen back on base

WASHINGTON—To improve its total-force personnel posture, the Air Force will move nearly 400 Airmen assigned to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service back to base-level comptroller squadrons.

Airmen working in Department of Defense bil-

lets like DFAS support the overall military mission, but do not directly support the Air Force's day-to-day business. The Air Force is looking to get some of those Airmen back, said Michael Montelongo, assistant secretary of the Air Force for financial management and comptroller.

Making a medical appointment gets easier

BY MAJ. JAMES WOOTEN

377th Medical Operations Squadron

Some changes in the appointment process at the clinic are expected to reduce time on hold for patients calling the clinic's appointment line, 846-3200.

"We have had quite a few problem days over the past couple of months when the wait time to speak to an appointment clerk was 20 minutes or longer," said Col. Stuart Cowles, 377th Medical Group commander.

"The problem was especially bad on days when we had less than a full staff available, or right after holidays, when the demand sometimes skyrocketed" he said. "We believe that the changes implemented in late January will significantly reduce the waiting time on the ap-

pointment line for most patients."

The first change that will be obvious to patients is in the menu of options available when a patient calls 846-3200.

"It's very important to listen to the new options on the appointment system when you call, and to make the right choice according to your needs," Colonel Cowles said. "The new options filter out some of the calls that were not specifically about making an appointment to new areas.

"We also have made it possible to connect directly to Pediatrics, Aerospace Medicine or the Gynecological exam section to make (or cancel) appointments at those clinics.

"Other changes," the colonel continued, "include direct access to the patient advocate and into the informa-

tion desk. The new choices reduce the call volume to the central appointment desk and having those clinics connected in this way will cut the wait time for those patients as well.

"We also added a new appointment clerk, which will be especially helpful during times when one of the clerks is out. Last, but not least, we made changes to some of our internal processes that should make access to care much more customer-friendly."

Colonel Cowles advised that the medical group leadership continues to evaluate the improvements made and will no doubt find more efficiencies.

Another tool to reduce the time spent on the phone is Tricareonline.com, which allows patients to book appointments online.

After you open an account in Tricareonline.com, you can book appointments for acute or routine primary care needs. You can also see and pick from appointments on the schedule for today or tomorrow.

Keep in mind that if today and tomorrow are not normal duty days for the clinic, there will be no appointments shown.

Most primary care appointments available to the appointment clerks to book are also available to you to book online. Tricareonline.com is available at all hours while the appointment desk hours are more limited to Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, 6:30 a.m.-3 p.m. and Wednesday and Friday, 6:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., due to mandatory fitness training.

Settlement of estate

Any person or persons having claims for or against the estate of Staff Sgt. Philip A. Wiskup, assigned to 377th Security Forces Squadron, Kirtland AFB, should contact the Summary Court Officer, 1st Lt. Tyler Bailey, 377 SFS, Kirtland AFB, 846-4281 or cell 975-3666.

Settlement of estate

Any person or persons having claims for or against the estate of Staff Sgt. Dayne S. Riddle, assigned to 58th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Kirtland AFB, should contact the Summary Court Officer, 1st Lt. Jesse Goolsby, 58th Maintenance Squadron, 851-4999.